



# Eastgate/I-90

## Land Use & Transportation Project

### CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MEETING AGENDA

**Thursday, April 5, 2012**

**5:30 – 6:30 P.M. – Room 1E-112**

***(Note meeting room location and shortened meeting time)***

**Bellevue City Hall – 450 110<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE**

1. Call to order (5:30)
2. Approval of minutes – January 5, 2012 (5:30 – 5:35) \*
3. Final report approval (5:35 – 6:30) \*
4. Adjourn (6:30)

\* *Related materials included in packet*

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CITY OF BELLEVUE  
EASTGATE/I-90  
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

January 5, 2012  
5:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-108

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Carrie Courter Blanton, Tom Bohman, Lindy Bruce, Dave Elliott, Jay Hamlin, Francois Larrivee, Mark Ludtka, Tom Perea, Rob Pucher, Jim Stanton, John Stokes, Cynthia Welti

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mark Ludtka, Tom Perea, Rob Pucher, Rachel Solemsaas (attempt to attend by conference call was unsuccessful)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Councilmember Jennifer Robertson

**STAFF PRESENT:** Franz Loewenherz, Transportation Department;  
Mike Bergstrom, Planning & Community  
Development Department

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Gerry Lindsay

**1. Call to Order**

Co-Chair Larrivee called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

A. October 6, 2011

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Bohman. Second was by Mr. Elliott and the motion carried unanimously.

B. November 3, 2011

Ms. Bruce referred to the third paragraph on page 2 and said the statement credited to Ms. Welti was in fact made by her.

Ms. Courter Blanton called attention to the last paragraph on the last page of the minutes and said the statement about iconic art and said she did not recall making the statement. She asked to have the paragraph revised to indicate she agreed with the statement of Ms. Welti reflected at the top of the same page.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Ms. Bruce. Second was by Ms. Welti and the motion carried unanimously.

**3. Public Comment**

Mr. Pat Callahan, 225 Beacon Drive, Bainbridge Island, provided the Committee members with a one-page statement outlining why a 150-foot height limit is needed to make the vision for their property in the transit-oriented zone work. The consultants hired by the city to indicate the kind of height limit needed to make something happen used a different process to reach their conclusion, though the conclusion they reached was essentially the same, which was that 12 floors are needed. The Committee was urged to allow building height of 150 feet in the transit-oriented zone. He also shared with the Committee photos of the building at Seventh and Madison in Seattle which went up when much of the surrounding land uses were lower; he suggested that it has added to the sense of entry and certainly is iconic. Something similar could happen in the heart of the Eastgate/I-90 corridor. A similar approach was taken in the International District which has added greatly to the community. Examples of local 12-story buildings were included in the presentation materials.

Ms. Stanton asked why a 12-story height limit is needed in order to make the project work. Mr. Callahan said the cost per square foot for a six-story building is higher because of the fixed cost elements that must be spread over a smaller base. The resulting cost per square foot must be translated into rents which accordingly for shorter buildings would have to be higher. In order to get to market rate rents, taller buildings with more total square footage are needed.

Mr. Norman Ballinger, 16226 SE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, said the transportation plan that involves state projects is all well and good, but he pointed out that the state does not have any money. The big traffic problem, especially in the morning, is westbound traffic that wants to turn north up 148<sup>th</sup> to get to the Microsoft campus. There needs to be a direct westbound off-ramp to neighborhood 148<sup>th</sup>. The city should be working with the state to make sure that happens. With regard to northbound on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, the area by Phantom Lake that crosses SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street is built over peat. Over the years the roadbed had been slowly sinking. If more traffic is encouraged to use that route, environmental problems will result. New development in the corridor could also increase the flow of runoff into the Phantom Lake.

Mr. Jack McCullough, 701 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle, reminded the Committee that the recommendation regarding the west side of the park and ride structure is to allow building heights of between four and six stories. He endorsed the recommendation and said it will work very well for that area. It is not clear how the range of permissible uses will play out, so the more flexibility allowed the better things will be.

#### **4. Finalize Preferred Alternative**

##### **A. Remaining Clarifications and Details**

##### **1. Heights and FARs in Select Areas**

Senior Planner Mike Bergstrom reviewed with the Committee the understanding of the staff regarding the intended building height, FAR and land uses for each area of the corridor, as outlined in the agenda memo.

Answering a question asked by Ms. Bruce, Mr. Bergstrom said the Newport Corporate Center where T-Mobile is located has a height of only 75 feet, though when viewed from the west it appears to be much taller, and an FAR of 1.2, which is calculated on gross square footage, exclusive of parking and mechanical areas.

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Mr. Bergstrom explained that the office developments in the corridor, with the exception of those in the very west end, were constructed with an FAR limit of 0.5. The Advanta development, viewed from its current footprint and property boundaries, is closer to an FAR of 1.0, but when calculated on the property associated with the development when it was constructed, the FAR is within the 0.5 limit. It is very difficult to achieve an FAR of 0.5 because at that limit surface parking is typically constructed, which eats up a lot of the buildable area; accordingly, most of the existing development in the area has an FAR of between 0.25 and 0.35.

Co-Chair Hamlin said it appeared to him the staff memo included an excellent capture of the kind of things the Committee highlighted as preferable for the area in and around the transit-oriented development center.

Mr. Elliott reminded the group that tearing down existing buildings is very expensive for a variety of reasons. Each building in the corridor has an expected life cycle and will eventually reach the point where the owner will recognize that the numbers no longer work and that redevelopment is the best option.

Mr. Stanton said what will really be important is how the FAR is manifested. By allowing more height, the building box can have a different shape. The design criteria will also dictate scale and bulk, which is really more important than FAR.

Mr. Bergstrom said there is a difference between capacity and projected growth. Often capacity exceeds the projected growth, and in the case of the corridor it probably does. The current projections over the 20-year period show an additional 1.0 million to 1.2 million square feet of additional office, though the consultant has suggested the smart move would be to plan for 1.5 million square feet.

Mr. Loewenherz said the travel demand modeling work is informed by the number of jobs and residents. The projections to a large extent focus on total square footage, which in turn will need to be translated into jobs and residents.

Mr. Stanton commented that if light rail could be added to the park and ride location, the amount of parking needed could potentially be reduced. The total number of trips could be reduced as well, and taken together the result would be more breathing room to do something different with that part of the corridor. Mr. Bergstrom said the assumption is that the park and ride area of the corridor is the logical place for a light rail station as Sound Transit III comes online. From a planning perspective, however, nothing is known about if and when nor about what a possible alignment might be. In any event, it makes sense to focus the big growth at that location. Mr. Stanton said LIDs and incentive funding could make it all happen sooner rather than later; facilitating the status quo will be counterproductive for the long term.

Co-Chair Larrivee asked if the proposed four- to six-stories is aggressive enough. Mr. Stanton said there is a threshold beyond which redevelopment will occur sooner rather than later. He said he was unsure if the proposed height limit has been tested relative to the FAR to make the result will afford the opportunity.

## 2. Corridor Character

Ms. Rachel Miller, of Makers Architecture & Urban Design, provided the Committee

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with a photo visual tour of the corridor, beginning east of the Lakemont interchange and moving westward. She noted that the focus has been on creating a sense of arrival at the Lakemont interchange; westbound drivers on I-90 encounter wooded areas, lake views and hints of development until they arrive at the Lakemont interchange. The landscape consulting firm HBB has been working with Makers on options for framing the views. Interchange designs should be attractive and should reinforce the “city in a park” identity. The interchanges should be designed to be safe as well as easily maintained, and they should reduce the impacts of the freeway in terms of air and water quality.

Ms. Miller said the concepts developed by HBB include sculpting the landscaping in a way that frames the views and reinforces what is already there. They take advantage of the existing special conditions, including the wetland and topographical features. By keeping sight lines open, opportunities for vagrancy are diminished. The meadow-oriented concept uses both deciduous and evergreen trees to frame the buildings and everything in the background. The wetland-oriented concept frames the views in a slightly different way by arranging the trees in another way.

As drivers continue westbound they encounter the ramp which for better or for worse is a landmark and a prominent feature. At that location the drivers can start to see taller buildings both to the north and south, leading them to understand they have entered a highly developed area. HBB believes the edges could be softened somewhat. In some segments the right-of-way between Eastgate Way and I-90 provides a fair amount of space to work with in which to add greenery, though in other areas there is very little space. The Committee may want to include policy language calling for working with the available space to the extent possible to plant vegetation in strategic clusters that will frame the buildings.

For the transit-oriented development area, the buildings will probably be some nine or ten stories tall. By selectively adding or removing vegetation, and by using green walls and climbing plants, the views could be framed nicely while making the area appear greener.

John Owen, also with Makers, shared some additional drawings based on the suggestions of the Committee and possible new buildings. The depictions included connections with the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail, the flyover ramp, the transit stop, Bellevue College, and the transit-oriented development. He noted that the buildings in the drawings were predicated primarily on an FAR of 1.5.

With regard to the question of whether or not adding development capacity will provide a windfall to property owners, Mr. Owen suggested from a design character standpoint the city could require developers to give something back to the area in exchange for additional density. The elements could include pedestrian-oriented street frontage, continuity of space, good connections to other parts of the corridor, especially Bellevue College, and green frontage.

Ms. Miller said that turning the 142<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge into a covered walkway could become a very important element. Policy language could be included outlining the need to make it sculptural and eye-catching. She shared with the Committee artist renderings of the views both to the north and south from I-90 at that location, as well as the views from further to the west along the corridor into Factoria and the Mercer Slough area.

The Committee was also shown drawings of what SE 36<sup>th</sup> Street might look like with the addition of the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail, planted medians, and edge planting

treatment.

Mr. Bergstrom showed slides of the existing trail system and parks in the study area, as well as the proposed Bellevue Airfield Park, other green nodes, and new trail connections.

Mr. Stanton commented that the possibilities associated with having a pedestrian corridor running through the middle of the transit-oriented development area are compelling. He asked if it would be a requirement or brought about through strong incentives. Mr. Loewenherz said the element will likely figure into the subarea plan update, which would then position the city to require it as development and redevelopment takes place. Mr. Bergstrom added that as part of the implementation approach standards will need to be developed that will set the expectations. Mr. Stanton said incentives to build the element initially would be preferable; to allow it to be constructed piecemeal over time would be far less desirable and could mean that for long periods of time it will be disconnected feature that will not draw people in.

Mr. Owen said some of the initial site analysis done posited a pedestrian-oriented street through the transit-oriented development area. He said the conclusion reached was that in most cases it could be put down on the edges of existing parcels. In that event, it would not be necessary to homogenize all of the different parcels to make it happen.

Ms. Bruce agreed with the need to preserve and enhance sight lines. She also commented that care should be taken when it comes to determining the kinds of attractive features to include. Currently there are waterfowl using the wetlands in the corridor, but it may not be the right move to include features that will encourage more geese. She voiced her support for the street landscape shown in the drawings and the notion of utilizing development incentives to get the street put together in a coherent fashion. A human-scale streetscape is what will sell the plan to the community at large. One thing that will need to be addressed relative to the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail along SE 36<sup>th</sup> Street will be the westbound bicycle traffic heading downhill interacting with pedestrians.

Mr. Loewenherz informed the Committee that earlier in the day he attended a meeting focused on getting under way with the design work for the trail. He said funds have been secured from the Scenic Byway Program, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration. The design work is slated to be completed by the end of 2012. He said the issue of downhill bicycle traffic using the same facilities as pedestrians was raised; how to avoid conflicts will definitely be part of the planning work.

Mr. Owen commented that the Washington State Department of Transportation has a basic landscaping treatment for interchange areas. Where local agencies want to contribute, enhancements can be made above the baseline. Mr. Loewenherz said the preliminary guestimate based on installation and maintenance for the acreage in question is \$3.2 million. He said strategies for how to generate the funds needed through public/private partnerships are being investigated.

## **5. Implementation Strategies**

Mr. Bergstrom said on the land use side there are some procedural steps that must be taken to allow the preferred alternative to come to fruition. It will be necessary to amend the Comprehensive Plan where the policies affecting the area are housed. In addition, the Land Use Code will need to be amended with regard to the development regulations,

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including the zoning requirements, allowable density, uses, and the conditions under which redevelopment can occur. Finally, the zoning maps will need to be amended to correlate with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code changes.

Mr. Bergstrom said the existing concomitant zoning agreements will need to be addressed as well. The agreements are a tool the city has used in association with rezones that were contingent on certain conditions specific to the property or properties involved in a rezone action. The conditions covered things such as uses, heights, setbacks, landscape treatments, or ongoing operations. As the development regulations are changed for the corridor, it will be necessary to be aware of all existing concomitant agreements, some of which may be obsolete because they have been fulfilled, some of which could possibly be treated in a different manner, and some of which may need to be retained.

Options for timing of the amendments will need to be weighed. Mr. Bergstrom said they could all be addressed in a single package by the Planning Commission and the City Council, or they could be sequenced geographically or by topic. The Council likely will want to make sure land use will not get out too far ahead of transportation infrastructure, which is partly a function of available funding for transportation infrastructure.

All of the code amendments will be subject to an environmental review as well, and as projects come online over time they will need to be checked against the environmental record developed to determine if additional analysis is needed.

Mr. Bergstrom said the building height and FAR recommendations have not been fully tested. Further work on that front will be done as part of the implementation phase. The testing is needed to make sure the regulations will work, make sure they will attract the type of development desired, and to make sure there is a proper balance struck if public benefit is a desired outcome; that will naturally lead to a discussion of what should be considered to be a public benefit.

Developments manifest themselves on the ground in direct relation to design guidelines. It will be necessary to make certain there will be a high level of design, particularly in highly visible locations or adjacent to single family neighborhoods.

One of the evaluation criteria developed by the CAC involves sustainable design solutions. As sites or buildings are designed, they should incorporate elements of environmental sustainability.

With regard to the increased development potential contributing to public benefit, Mr. Bergstrom said the proposal is to continue the baseline FAR of 0.5. To go beyond that base will trigger the need to provide some public benefits, and in that respect there will be no outright windfall.

The transit-oriented development should include high-quality design; a mix of office, residential and retail uses; true integration of transit services; walkable site designs with pedestrian-scale streets and pedestrian-oriented street-level uses; a strong relationship to Bellevue College; public open spaces and amenities; and good motorized and non-motorized connections within the node and with surrounding areas. Development within the core should include ground-floor retail, public benefits, assure availability of transportation improvements, and include a substantial residential component.

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The policy statements included in the CAC's final report and recommendation will become a guide for amending the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Code. Mr. Bergstrom said that could include the notion of transfer of development rights, which would fit into the transit-oriented development area as well as everywhere public benefits are expected.

Mr. Stanton pointed out that currently there is little to no market for TDRs. If the market for them returns, their highest value likely will be items that development needs, such as parking, building height, and square footage. If the regulations are written to allow those things anyway, there will be no incentive to purchase TDRs.

Mr. Bergstrom said the staff is looking at different SEPA approaches. He allowed that the environmental staff is not big on "planned actions" in that they do not always provide the certainty that developers and the public desire. There are new mechanisms under SEPA that might be better.

With regard to requiring mixed use, Mr. Stanton pointed out that the requirement exists in downtown Bellevue and it has been a challenge for the developers. He said mixed use should be encouraged but not required in every single building.

Mr. Loewenherz noted that the Council principles are clear with regard to developing a vision for the corridor that has a transportation system sensitive to and supportive of economic development, community character, and the environment. That vision has informed the process to date.

Mr. Loewenherz said travel demand modeling is informed by the land use forecasts and the system network. He shared with the Committee a map of the study area showing the intersection LOS scores as they currently exist, as they would exist under the No Action land use alternative, the 2030 preferred alternative without any state-planned and local intersection transportation improvements, and the 2030 preferred alternative with the transportation improvements. He highlighted the intersection at SE 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and noted that things will get significantly worse under the No Action alternative but will improve significantly under the preferred alternative with the transportation improvements. Currently there are some 21,000 jobs in the corridor. Under the preferred land use alternative, more than 6000 new jobs would be added.

Having reminded the Committee members that the traffic analysis zones used in the transportation modeling go beyond the project area, which makes it appear there is more residential than there actually is, Mr. Loewenherz pointed out that there will be a growth in the residential population where it has not existed previously. The total existing weekday evening peak hour total entering volumes for the 44 intersections within the traffic analysis zones is close to 95,000. Under the No Action land use alternative, regardless of what is done relative to land use in the corridor, there would be a significant increase in traffic in the corridor. The increment bump is far more modest under the preferred land use alternative. Total vehicle delay, regardless of the alternative, will tick upward in the corridor, though the increment is constrained under the preferred alternative with the transportation improvements.

Mr. Loewenherz said the transportation strategy is predicated on all the modeling work and community engagement. The community has been clear about their desire to see a multimodal approach that will move more than just cars. The result is a three-pronged approach focused on targeted capacity increases, managing demand, and making better



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use of the overall system. The Committee gave its nod to the approach in November 2011. The complete project list carries a daunting price tag, though many of them are state projects. The city will have direct responsibility for the arterial projects, while the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway and the transit project costs will be shared with others.

The highest priority projects, selected from the larger list, include the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway trail, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Place crossing transit improvements, the intersection improvements at Eastgate Way and 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Eastgate Way and 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, and 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and SE 37<sup>th</sup> Street, and the additional southbound lane on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Of the projects for which the state will have the responsibility, the eastbound auxiliary lane improvements, the Lakemont interchange improvements, and a couple of ped-bike connections into the I-90 business park are high priorities. Collectively, the high-priority projects total \$63 million on the low end and \$77 million on the high end. Of those, the intersection capacity improvements range between \$10 and \$15 million depending on their configurations.

Mr. Loewenherz said the city has been working closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation and has expressed the desire to see many new onramps and direct ramps connecting in many different directions. For their part, the state has indicated that their limited funding makes those improvements unlikely. However, the movement westbound I-90 to northbound 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE would be improved with the proposed intersection or roundabout improvement.

Mr. Stanton observed that the transportation plan yields only two problematic intersections in the immediate study area. Even so, the time delays between current conditions and ultimate buildout conditions are so minimal as to be within a margin of error. Accordingly, it would appear the best place to spend money would be on things that would encourage multimodal travel.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Stokes, Mr. Loewenherz commented that generally speaking a certain degree of delay is an acceptable condition of doing business. The Traffic Standards Code for the study area states that concurrency is violated when the level of service falls to E+. The level of delay at LOS D intersections is not necessarily significant; it is LOS E and F where having to sit through two or more signal cycles can be expected.

With regard to the Factoria area, Mr. Loewenherz said while no vehicle capacity improvements are planned, improvements to pedestrian facilities are envisioned. The full array of transportation improvements includes a call for a better defined transit center and sidewalk improvements in Factoria. At the intersection of SE 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Factoria Boulevard, improvements to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle crossings are included.

Mr. Stanton said the only project on the high-priority list he questioned was I-3, 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and Eastgate Way. He suggested the degradation to LOS D is not sufficient to need the project. Mr. Loewenherz said westbound traffic exiting I-90 at 150<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE then working their way east on Eastgate Way often must sit through two or more cycles before being able to head north on 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Co-Chair Larrivee suggested the high-priority list would be hard to sell to the public without some investment in the Eastgate Way/156<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE intersection.

Mr. Stanton said he would prefer to see bicycle lanes added to Eastgate Way along with

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other non-motorized elements. The suggestion was echoed by other Committee members as well.

There was consensus among the Committee members in favor of approving the high-priority projects list with project I-3 removed and replaced with bicycle lanes on Eastgate Way.

**6. Final Report Direction**

Co-Chair Hamlin said staff will focus next on developed the final report, incorporating the preferred alternative and the CAC recommendations. The final report will be submitted to the Council. He noted that the Council will be provided with an update on January 17, at which time some additional topics may be identified, triggering the need for another meeting of the CAC.

Mr. Stanton said he would like to see the final report mention the Phantom Lake stormwater runoff issue. While not within the scope of the study area, it is a relevant topic and would be appropriate to address.

**7. Adjourn**

Co-Chair Hamlin adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.



## Eastgate/I-90 Land Use & Transportation Project

**TO:** Eastgate/I-90 Citizen Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Mike Bergstrom, Planning & Community Development Department  
Franz Loewenherz, Transportation Department

**DATE:** March 29, 2012

**SUBJECT:** April 5, 2012 CAC Meeting – Agenda Item No. 3 – Final Report Approval

Enclosed is the CAC's final report and recommendation for this project. Upon CAC approval, and signature of the transmittal letter (included in the report) by the co-chairs, this report will be presented to the City Council at its April 23 study session. Please review this report prior to the meeting. In addition to the electronic copy, a hard copy is being mailed to each of you. Note that Appendix B (Transportation Strategies Report) is not physically attached to this report.

The report is intended to summarize the background and process that led to your recommendation, as well as some of the observations and discoveries made along the way. Recognizing that there remains much future work to be done in order to realize the vision captured in your recommendation, the report includes concepts and strategies for its future implementation.

We want to express our appreciation for the hard work of the committee, and our sincere pleasure in working with you over the past year and a half. You have done a remarkable job of developing a transformational yet realistic and implementable vision for the future of the Eastgate/I-90 corridor. We look forward to future opportunities to work together.